A.W.

Miss Weston to Miss Estlin.

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Versailles. Aug 20 - 54.

Dear Mary

A few days ago your letter & enclosures by Mr Chamerovzow's were received, accompanied by a note from himself, proposing to come to see us on Saturday Morning. Maria wrote to him directly begging him to dine with us & to come as early & give us as much of the day as possible. Accordingly he came to us yesterday, & passed the whole day with us from 12 at noon until the 10 o'clock train for Paris, excepting an hour wh. he took to visit an acquaintance living here. We had a very pleasant visit from Mr C. & I think *he* did not find the interview disagreeable. We were much pleased with him personally, & impressed by a belief in his honesty of purpose & character. He seems to be a large minded & intelligent man, a *real* *abolitionist*, I shd expect him to stand fire in America (wh. is a deal more than his committee do) He is in a very uncomfortable position in some respects certainly, & here I see the want of candor & uprightness of that Comee in inviting him to fill the responsible post wh. he occupies without giving him, as to my astonishment I find they did not, any anticipation of the shoals & quicksands in wh. the ship was engaged that he was to pilot into a safe harbor. It appears he became Secretary without knowing there was anything objectionable in Scoble's character or conduct, & what is more surprising still, that not a word in relation to his S.'s doings has even yet passed between him & the committee!

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[Miss Weston to Miss Estlin - Versailles Aug 20-54]

Still, notwithstanding the past melancholy history, Mr C. declares that persons are mistaken who act or speak under the impression that the new policy of the Socy. is his personal work, & not the intentions of the Society - I need not recapitulate all he said - Of course we said that the course wh. was satisfactory as that of Mr C. for him ~~Mr C.~~ personally, was too little for a Comee. wh. had such heavy wrongs to repair as that body had been guilty of towards the Am. Abolts. - & we tried to make him understand what is or ought to be our position towards them. There was the fullest & frankest exposition of our experience & our views. We never talked more freely with you than we did with Mr C. upon this subject, our time was of course limited, but of the nine hours we secured perhaps six for conversation strictly on the subject of the difference whose occasion we deplore; and our discussion proceeded in perfect good feeling to each other personally, tho' he cd. not fail to be greatly pained to find how deep was the gulf of objection & distrust wh. the steady enmity of the B. & F. A.S. from 1840 to the time of Scoble's dismissal had created between us & them. We went back to the history of the secession & its causes, in America, - the personal character, & subsequent history of the seceders, the conduct of the B. & F. then & since - their active slanders, & their cooling of our friends & heating of our parties". - We took great pains to impress on the mind of Mr C. that we were not living or acting under the dominion of any petty spite or personal feeling - that great principles - & the safety & integrity of the Cause whose servants we are, were what we regarded for the truth's sake & the slave's sake, we are bound to vindicate our characters from the calumnies with which they have been loaded.

[Miss Weston to Miss Estlin Aug 20-54. Versailles]

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"I think Mr Chamerovzow saw more distinctly than he had seen before the real difficulties in our way; that we were defending principles not fighting for a personal battle. He could not see from our stand point all the time, but from time to time as the discussion proceeded I saw a new conviction of the terrible mistake that had been so wantonly done, enter his mind as I think it had never done before. I think that we made him understand that we were in a position with regard to his Comee - wh. was not of our seeking & from wh. we could not retreat at will, &c

I think that Mr C. was deeply moved by the chapter of A. S. history that we opened together. He had read it before perhaps, but repetition from persons who had been a part of it might have fixed his attention more deeply. I saw that he was pained by two inferences wh. he drew from our whole conversation - first that we believed that the influence of his comee. had been greatly diminished by their course, & secondly that we did not attach a very vast importance to them anyhow - that we were grieved that any man, men, or body shd. be in the wrong but if they were the worse for them (Of course his stand point & ours were different he cd. not be expected to hold his Comee as lightly as we do, believing ~~that~~ as I think we are fully justified in doing that few of them wd. have the force or the benevolence to be abolitionists in America.) When a man really loves the cause he is important to it otherwise far better he never come near it.

I shd. be very glad to see you to talk over this visit but time & space fail me to write satisfactorily about it. Suffice it to say that I believe both parties enjoyed the occasion, as well as it

[Miss Weston to Miss Estlin. Aug 26.]

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as well as it was possible to do where so much painful discussion was unavoidable, & by "painful" I do not mean that anything of a personal character entered into our discussion but ~~and~~ it is not agreeable to commence an intercourse with people whom we are disposed to like & trust, by denouncing persons of whom they think well. Naturally one has a right to a little time to establish a claim to consideration or confidence for oneself before refusing it to others. However neither Mr C. nor ourselves could make the conditions of our interview other than they were, & we made the best of them on both sides. — Emma joined our discussion in vindication of her claim to be "an early Abolitionist"; both she & Lizzie were pleased with Mr C. He dined with us as I told you, & just as we had swallowed our coffee we were told that the great fountain of Neptune was going to play directly. (the grand piece des grands Eaux) so we moved to the spot & the grand display of water in the advancing ~~tw~~twilight & the park quite deserted was very pretty, — tho' truth to say our guest was too deeply interested in the conversation to pay much attention to it. We walked & talked awhile in the gardens came back to tea, had a little talk of travels the Rhine & its legends &c. & at ½ past 9 o'clock Mr C. left us, Laugel going with him to the Embarcadere. I think he will come again. He said many things that impressed me much, that is things concerning himself that made me like him extremely, & believe in his honesty. I believe he will do the [illegible] very uncomfortable for one of an [illegible] to keep the [illegible] character, but I do not see that he can do anything to change our relations to the Com^e — especially while refusing to be considered apart from them.

There was not the least restraint on our intercourse with Mr C. We had not to conceal things & were only too glad of an opportunity of freeing our minds